

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIALPA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR PRIORITY

SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 672

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 1861

FROM ROCAP

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: GT SWEL

SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE IMPACT ON FLOW OF HONDURAN AND SALVADORAN

GOODS: A DEAL POSSIBLE?

1. ENRIQUE DELGADO, FORMER PRESIDENT OF CABEI AND CURRENTLY HEAD OF SIECA/BROOKINGS UNIT (PROTEC SOURCE), TOLD ROCAP DIRECTOR YESTERDAY AFTERNOON THAT HE HAD SPENT MARCH SECOND-THIRD IN TEGUCIGALPA AT BEHEST OF SIECA SECGEN MAYORGA IN ATTEMPT TO WORK OUT A DEAL WHICH WOULD ENABLE HONDURAS TO CONTINUE EXPORTING PRODUCTS TO GUATEMALA VIA EL SALVADOR AND ALLOW SALVADORAN EXPORTS AND IMPORTS TO TRANSIT HONDURAS AND USE PUERTO CORTEZ.

2. BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE HONDURAN GOODS BOUND FOR GUATEMALA ENTERED GUATEMALA ON CA 10 AND PASSED THROUGH ZACAPA AND EL RANCHO AND THENCE TO GUATEMALA CITY. EARTHQUAKE-INDUCED LANDSLIDES HAVE CLOSED THE EL RANCHO-GUATEMALA CITY ROAD TO HEAVY TRAFFIC. SINCE EARTHQUAKE, HONDURAN EXPORTS TO GUATEMALA HAVE DETOURED THROUGH EL SALVADOR. ACCORDING TO DELGADO, HONDURANS ARE APPREHENSIVE THAT SALVADORAN COMPLAISANCE, CONFIDENTIAL

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BORN OF SYMPATHY FOR GUATEMALA'S PLIGHT, WILL SOON PASS,

AND THAT IT WILL THEN BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR HONDURAS TO TRADE WITH GUATEMALA.

3. SIECA IS TRYING TO GAIN HONDUAN AND SALVADORAN ACCEPTANCE OF A PLAN WHEREBY SALVADORAN EXPORTS AND IMPORTS WHICH PREVIOUSLY HAD MOVED THROUGH PUERTO RARRIOS AND PUERTO SANTO TOMAS DE CASTILLA WOULD BE ROUTED THROUGH PUERTO CORTEZ WHILE HONDURAN GOODS WOULD GONTINUE TO BE PERMITTED TO PASS THROUGH EL SALVADOR. DELGADO REPORTED THAT PRIOR TO THE EARTHQUAKE ABOUT EIGHT PERCENT OF EL SALVADOR'S EXPORTS MOVED THROUGH THESE TWO GUATEMALAN PORTS. SONCE PUERTO BARRIOS PORT FACILITIES BADLY DAMAGED, AND SINCE THERE IS CONSIDERABLE CONGESTION AT PUERTO SANTO TOMAS DE CASTILLA, THE SALVADORANS WOULD BENEFIT BY USE PUERTO CORTEZ. TRAFFIC INVOLVED WOULD REPORTEDLY BE ABOUT TEN TRACTORS/TRAILERS DAILY.

4. DR. DELGADO RPORTS THAT WHILE THE BENEFITS OF THE PLAN FOR BOTH PARTIES ARE OBVIOUS, THERE IS SOME RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF EACH TO SUPPORT IT FOR FEAR OF ATTACKS BY CHAVINISTIC ELEMENTS. HARRISON. ALSO PASSED INFO TO AMEMBASSY/USAID GUATEMALA. MELOY

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